

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended): A cap for protecting the bristles (1) on the end of a paintbrush (1,2,3), this cap including a housing (7,8) with means (4,5) for its easily reversible fixing on a ferrule (3) provided at the distal end of the handle (2) of the paintbrush, with two shells (7,8) articulated together at one of their ends and capable of being folded down one toward the other in order to close the housing (7,8), the latter being provided with means for locking its closure by means of mutual nesting of the shells (7,8), ~~characterized in that~~ wherein one (7) of the shells, which is fixed, is extended by a rigid cradle (6) for receiving the ferrule (3), this cradle being provided, at least in the vicinity of its respective ends, with members (4,5) for respective gripping of the ferrule (3) by means of elastic deformation of the members (4,5), while the other shell (8), which is movable, is provided at its distal end with a member (16) for locking in the closed position of the housing (7,8) by means of juxtaposed superimposition, which interacts by means of nesting with a complementary locking member (17) of the fixed shell (7).

2. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gripping members (4,5) are composed of a proximal member (4) for gripping at least with an axial stop interacting with a complementary relief (9) of the ferrule (3), and of a

distal member (5) for gripping at least with radial retention by means of localized peripheral gripping of the ferrule (3), such that the attachment of the proximal gripping member (4) on the ferrule (3) of the paintbrush gives this member a pivot-point function, about which the cradle (6) tilts as far as radial gripping of the ferrule (3) by the distal gripping member (5).

3. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in ~~either of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the gripping members (4,5) of the cradle (6) are organized in the form of jaws of which the clamping parts are arranged as at least one radial lip (12).

4. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the profile of the radial lip (12) is faceted in order to grip the ferrule via distant points (10,11).

5. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the cradle (6) includes, on its outer face, a dorsal stiffening rib (14) extending from its proximal end toward the area where it joins the fixed shell (7).

6. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the dorsal rib (14) and the outer face of the fixed shell (7) are substantially flush.

7. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in ~~one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the locking members (16,17) of the shells (7,8) each consist of a set of antagonistic lateral reliefs with radial extension, which are, respectively, provided at the corresponding ends of the shells (7,8) in a substantially radially median area of the housing (7,8).

8. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the housing (7,8) is provided with means (19) for guiding the movable shell (8) toward the closed position of the housing (7,8), formed from interacting guide members of the shells (7,8), respectively, at the periphery of their orifice.

9. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in claim 8, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the interacting members (19) for guiding the shells (7,8) are formed by a rabbet (19) for mutual superimposed positioning of the shells (7,8), this rabbet (19) being provided along the periphery of the orifice of at least either one of the shells (7,8) in order to receive the edge of the other shell.

10. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the movable shell (8) includes lateral gripping wings (20) enabling it to be gripped and handled at least when the housing (7,8) is opened by the user.

11. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in claim 8, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the lateral gripping wings (20) are provided as an extension of the lateral reliefs (16,17) of the movable shell (8) in order to strengthen the distal end of the latter (8) forming an orifice for the passage of the handle (2).

12. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in any one of the preceding claims claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least either one of the shells (7,8) includes ventilation openings (15), particularly shaped as axial slots, such that said openings (15) allow a sizeable circulation of air, without thereby significantly adversely affecting the stiffness of the shell, through the wall of which the ventilation openings (15) are provided.

13. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein it includes an air passage to allow, in the closed position, a circulation of air via its distal end.

14. (Currently Amended): The cap as claimed in claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said air passage is fored by opposite openings made, respectively, through the fixed shell (7) and the movable shell (8).